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13 April 1979

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Meeting of Senior Review Panel with DCI and DD/NFA,
11 April 1979

1. The Senior Review Panel met with the DCI in his office at 2:30 p.m., 11 April 1979. Meeting lasted for about 30 minutes. Present were Adm. Turner, Dr. Bowie, Amb. Leonhart, Dr. Knorr, and Gen. Palmer.

2. Adm. Turner opened the meeting with a brief statement about the importance of national estimates and Intelligence Community assessments, mentioning as an example the need to project into the future the nature and significance of the resurgence of Islam in the Moslem world. The need for incentives--such as an award for the best NIE of the year, and the development of the required talent for a full career as an expert intelligence analyst in the region like South Asia, for example, were discussed. Dr. Bowie mentioned the progress being made by OPA, OER and OGCR, jointly, in compiling a list of 40 to 50 countries, regions, or topics for which long term experts were needed, but stated that it was a relatively long range project. He also emphasized the importance of broader, regional analyses and his intention to pursue these despite reluctance within NFAC to undertake regional estimates. Adm. Turner stressed the use of outside help--academicians, consultants, retired ambassadors, and even contractual studies--to help fill present gaps in our knowledge. The DCI suggested that the Panel might find such consultants useful in carrying out specific tasks and could be of great help to the Agency in identifying individual consultants who might be drawn on in its work.

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3. In response to Adm. Turner's query as to how the Panel was doing, Amb. Leonhart stated that the Panel was fairly well "settle in"; that it had seen its first priority to be the state of the political estimates, that its focus to date had been almost exclusively on the estimative side, having commented on fifty-odd upcoming intelligence papers, many of them concept papers for an estimate; and that the Panel would submit in about 10 days to two weeks to Dr. Bowie its views on problems in the current estimative process and procedures, together with constructive suggestions for improvement. (Note: For the period 1 November 1978 through 10 April 1979, the Panel prepared written comments appearing in 52 memorandums dealing with 34 different subjects.) Dr. Bowie remarked that the Panel's comments had been "excellent" and were very helpful to him. He also mentioned his continuous emphasis on the preparation of concept papers as an initial step in a new estimate and Bruce Clarke's efforts which he hopes will assist him to bring about a more rational allocation of NFAC resources and a reliable production schedule of estimates.

4. Amb. Leonhart then went on to say that while the Panel would of course continue to involve itself in critiques of current intelligence production, it felt the time was approaching to turn to other functions mentioned in its Charter. He asked whether the DCI had any preference or priorities for its next round of operations. Dr. Bowie commented that he would like the Panel to undertake a systematic effort to get policymaker reactions as to the effectiveness of intelligence efforts. Adm. Turner endorsed this and encouraged the Panel's getting into a survey of policymakers. Dr. Bowie pointed out that such contacts may serve not only to sound out policymakers, but also perhaps "educate" them on the virtues of wide-ranging, forward-looking estimates.

5. In connection with the present low state of national estimates, Gen. Palmer mentioned the apparent reluctance on the part of other elements of the Intelligence Community to undertake an NIE and suggested that perhaps the

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Panel might do some missionary work here. Adm. Turner's reaction cautioned the Panel to go slow on this because he did not want others in the Community to interpret any such overturns as a CIA attempt to dominate the arena or interfere with the perogatives and responsibilities of other departments.

6. Referring to some of Dr. Knorr's published works Adm. Turner cited the point that assumptions, frequently unstated, all too often drive the conclusions of an estimate and that such assumptions were sometimes not sufficiently identified and challenged. He urged the Panel to keep this in mind in its review function.

7. Adm. Turner emphasized one of the Agency's major current problems, this one stemming from the Iranian experience, namely to gather all the intelligence data on other vital countries [redacted] needed to prevent another so-called intelligence/policy failure. He said that the pressure was really on DDO to devote relatively more resources to such areas in comparison to the attention given the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He mentioned further the urgent need to harness all available sources of information inside and outside the United States towards this end, and asked the Panel to advise him whenever it believed there might be problems in obtaining access to information of value in other departments or agencies.

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8. Dr. Knorr mentioned the fine line between objective intelligence and relating it to US policy options, and the reluctance within the Agency to address the effects of US policy choices in this context for fear of being accused of seeming to appear as a proponent of certain policy actions. He indicated that the Panel felt very strongly that national estimates should illuminate the implications of US policy options without taking sides. Dr. Bowie indicated his complete agreement with this view while Adm. Turner appeared to support this view likewise. Time did not permit any further discussion of this point.

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9. Amb. Leonhart noted that the Panel had in mind observing the stream of intelligence, or intelligence patterns, pertaining to a particular country, region or topic over a period of some months--rather than exclusively looking at individual estimates--with the view of checking for consistency, cohesion, frequency of intelligence reporting, effects, and the question of implicit bias. Dr. Bowie agreed, and pointed out that this was related to the post-mortem function and might well be combined with Panel efforts to survey policymaker opinions with regard to the quality and utility of major intelligence products.

10. Amb. Leonhart thanked the DCI for the recent issue (5 April 1979) of "Notes from the Director" which described the Senior Review Panel, and includes biographical sketches of its members. The Panel appreciated his thoughtfulness and believed this would be useful within the Agency. He raised the question whether, if the Panel were to undertake surveys of policymaker reactions to NIEs and other intelligence production, the Intelligence Community outside the Agency was aware of the Panel's existence and purpose. Although Dr. Bowie indicated his feeling that the Panel was indeed known to the Community, Adm. Turner thought something more should be done. He asked whether the Panel would like him to take them to an NFIB meeting, introduce them and briefly discuss the role of the Panel. The Panel accepted the suggestion with pleasure, and the DCI said he would arrange it.

11. In concluding the meeting Adm. Turner mentioned that he had written an article for publication about the State of Intelligence Today based on recent speeches he had been giving. He expressed the feeling that this was one way to bolster the morale of intelligence analysts and enhance their prestige. He also reiterated the need for incentives to encourage promising analysts and reward those who had performed outstandingly well, and asked that we let him know when an analyst produced an uncommonly good paper. (At the DCI's direction, a copy of the article mentioned has been provided to the Panel.)

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Bruce Palmer, Jr.

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Klaus Knorr

W.L.
William Leonhart

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